

# **CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

## **Transportation and Megacities**

### **The 11<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Transport Research 2007**

Megacities are larger than most nations. The world's population of 6 billion is expected to increase by 50% in the next 45-50 years with most of the new growth concentrated in urban areas. In essence, the world's urban population is expected to double in this period. By 2030, it is expected that, for the first time in history, two out of three people will live in urban areas, with most of the growth occurring in countries with developing economies. Megacities are currently defined by the United Nations (UN) as cities with over 10 million people. A historical look at megacities shows that the definition has changed over the past decades, and will most likely continue to increase. The UN coined the term megacities to differentiate areas of the highest population concentrations from other urban areas. Given the rapidly growing rates of urbanization, population concentrations that differentiate megacities from other urban areas have increased and will continue to increase with time and context. There are over 20 megacities in the world today found in North and South America, Asia and Africa. The most populous cities include Tokyo (26.4 million), Mexico City (18 million), Sao Paulo (18 million), New York (16.7 million) and Mumbai (16 million). From 1975 to 2015, the number of megacities will have increased from five (with three of them in the developing world) to 26 (with all but four in the developing world) ([www.ChannelOne.com](http://www.ChannelOne.com) 2000, [www.NationMaster.com](http://www.NationMaster.com)).

Although megacities are increasingly concentrated in low-income and some middle-income countries, they have global risks and opportunities that affect populations everywhere. Conditions in megacities with developing economies affect the quality of life in countries with developed economies. In regions with developing economies, megacities attract people who are seeking a better life: a higher standard of living, better jobs and education, and other attributes of a higher quality of life. Their problems however are significant and many: explosive population growth, alarming increases in poverty, massive infrastructure deficits, severe pressures on land and housing, environmental concerns such as contaminated water, air pollution, overdrawn aquifers and unchecked weed growth, disease, high death rates, drug-resistant strains of infection, economic dependence on federal or state governments that constrains the independence of megacity administrations, and capital scarcity are all examples of the issues megacities are facing. The combination of high population density, poverty and limited resources makes megacities vulnerable to health risks that can be easily and rapidly propagated to the rest of the world. Furthermore, megacities are also vulnerable to natural (e.g., ecological, earthquakes etc.) and man-made (e.g., terrorist attacks) disasters, whose impacts could be felt in the rest of the world. They are also places where social unrest originates. At the same time, megacities are critical for social and economic development and offer new market opportunities to both high-income and low-income countries alike (Bugliarello 1999). In countries with developing economies, megacities with their large pools of cheaper labor may trigger the relocation of jobs from high-income countries. Thus, all told, megacities are a critical global issue.

For megacities to function adequately, effective transportation is critical. The intent of this session is to define the transportation opportunities, challenges and risks that megacities face in regions with developed and developing economies, and articulate the necessary research and policy opportunities to address them proactively. Papers are invited on a wide range of issues including (but not limited to the following: transportation planning, engineering, policy development, funding, institutional issues, integrated land use and transportation planning, environmentally-conscious transportation planning, public health, and the need for integrating other disciplines in developing and ensuring effective transportation systems for megacities.

Please submit your abstracts by *Friday, April 28, 2006*, at the conference website: [www.uctc.net/wctrs](http://www.uctc.net/wctrs).

#### **For more information contact:**

Adjo Amekudzi, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA, 30332-0322, Tel: 404-894-0404, Email: [adjo.amekudzi@ce.gatech.edu](mailto:adjo.amekudzi@ce.gatech.edu), or

Elizabeth Deakin, Ph.D., Professor, City and Regional Planning; Director, UC Transportation Center; Co-Director, Center for Global Metropolitan Studies, 2614 Dwight Way, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berkeley, CA 94720, Tel: 510-642-4749, Email: [edeakin@uclink.berkeley.edu](mailto:edeakin@uclink.berkeley.edu)